

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6788

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UR, US
SUBJECT: TASS ATTACKS ON VOA AND AMERICAN ZIONIST ACTIVITIES

REF: MOSCOW 6618,

1. TASS ENGLISH WIRE ON APRIL 28 ATTACKS VOA FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE STORY OF THE DEATH OF THE MINSK REFUSENIK COLONEL, YEFIM DAVIDOVICH. THE TICKER ITEM NOTES THAT DAVIDOVICH HAD HAD A HISTORY OF HEART TROUBLE AND THAT HIS DOCTOR HAD ORDERED COMPLETE REST. INSTEAD, DAVIDOVICH RECEIVED FOUR AMERICAN ZIONIST ACTIVISTS, CAROL AND MARK GOLDBERG AND LEON AND TODD JICK. HE DIED SUDDENLY DURING HIS INTERVIEW. THE CONVERSATION, ACCORDING TO TASS, CONCERNED ZIONIST THEMES. "THE GUESTS FROM THE USA INSTIGATED DAVIDOVICH TO SLANDEROUS ATTACKS AGAINST SOVIET POWER, INCITED HIM TO DEMAND AGAIN THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES ALLOW HIM TO GO TO ISRAEL..."
 2. THE TASS STORY NOTES THAT DAVIDOVICH'S DEATH "...ATTRACTED THE CLOSEST ATTENTION OF PROPAGANDISTS OF THE 'VOA', AND IN THEIR BROADCAST ON APRIL 27 THEY CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO GIVE A MOST UNEXPECTED EXPLANATION OF DAVIDOVICH'S DEATH, WHICH ALLEGEDLY RESULTED FROM 'PERSECUTIONS' BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES." THE TICKER ITEM CONCLUDES "YES, IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT THE ZIONIST ACTIVISTS FROM THE USA SHOULDN'T HAVE COME TO SEE THAT EVENING THE GRAVELY SICK DAVIDOVICH, AS WELL AS THAT
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THE 'VOA' SHOULD NOT HAVE DISTORTED THE FACTS IN THE HOPE

THAT SOMEONE WOULD TAKE LIES FOR TRUTH."

3. COMMENT: SO FAR WE HAVE SEEN THIS STORY ONLY ON THE TASS ENGLISH SERVICE. IT REVEALS, NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUED SOVIET SENSITIVITY WITH RESPECT BOTH TO VOA BROADCASTS AND THE ALLEGED ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN VISITORS. SHOULD THE STORY EVENTUALLY APPEAR IN THE DOMESTIC PRESS AS WELL, IT WILL BE INDICATIVE OF EVEN MORE HEIGHTENED SOVIET CONCERN. IT IS COMMON, AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, TO WARN SOVIET CITIZENS AGAINST ASSOCIATION WITH FOREIGNERS. VOA BROADCASTS ARE SUBJECT TO CONTINUOUS SOVIET CRITICISM. THE DAVIDOVICH DEATH GIVES THE PROPAGANDIST A STICK WITH WHICH TO BEAT TWO PROPAGANDA DRUMS AT THE SAME TIME.
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